

III. THE WEST

Cuba - Soviet Bloc

Eighty Russians arrived in Cuba on 22 May to join the Soviet Trade Commission established during Mikoyan's visit in February, according to information considered reliable by the US service attachés in Havana. Caracas newspapers this week reported that groups of Russians and Czechs have recently been passing through Venezuela en route to Havana by several airlines. Their documents described them as mechanics, technicians, and experts in varying fields, and a "diplomatic mission of technical assistance." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in the past three months the Castro regime has admitted numerous bloc nationals without much apparent regard to their status or activities. [REDACTED]

The attachés report that the influence of Russians is beginning to be felt all over Cuba, and they believe that Soviet advisers assisted in the planning which led to the recent order for substantial use of Soviet crude oil in all refineries in Cuba. Five Soviet tankers have already delivered oil; and others are en route under a reported agreement calling for 1,500,000 tons to be received by Cuba in 1960. This probably includes some refined products. Cuban-flag vessels will commence direct trade with Russia this month.

SS^{sk} An unverified report that 70 to 80 young Cubans have been sent to the USSR for jet training has added to speculation that the Soviet bloc may soon provide Castro with jet planes--probably through Czechoslovakia, with which he has just resumed relations. SS^{sk} The same report adds that university students from all Cuban provinces are in the USSR for an "indoctrination course." They may also receive technical training, which Castro officials consider a primary need since many trained technicians have broken with the regime. [REDACTED]

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